Hendrik De Smet: *Spreading Patterns*. Diffusional Change in the English System of Complementation, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013, viii, 279 pp.

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In ›Spreading Patterns‹, De Smet explores an enormously large amount of data and discusses, in particular, the diffusion of the following three forms of complementation in the history of English: (1) *for … to* infinitives, (2) what he calls »integrated participle clauses« (p. 4, et passim), and (3) gerund complements. Some illustrative examples follow:

1. »It was neither my intention nor aim *for* this *to happen*« (p. 73)
2. »I am *tired hearing* of the Duchess of Chiselhurst's ball« (p. 102)[1]
3. »Would you *mind putting* Bessie's exercise book back exactly where you found it?« (p. 131)

›Spreading Patterns‹ is certainly an invaluable addition to the research into complementation in English. Due to the shortage of space, however, I would like to concentrate upon just three aspects of this book in the following discussion.

First of all, I would like to mention how much the field benefits from De Smet's compilation of CEMET (Corpus of Early Modern English Texts), CLMET (Corpus of Late Modern English Texts), CLMETEV (Corpus of Late Modern English Texts, extended version), and CEN (Corpus of English Novels). Although the release of these corpora dates back some time, it is still worthy of mention in the present review, as they form the basis of ›Spreading Patterns‹ together with other corpora available to date. About Late Modern English in particular, De Smet remarks, referring to Rydén (1984) and Denison (1998), that »no sizable corpus was available to represent the Late Modern English period, which is probably the most neglected period of the English Language« (p. 15). He ventures to challenge the neglected period in this book, and this has been made possible by the above-mentioned corpora he himself has compiled. Thus, his contribution to the field should be doubly appreciated. The Late Modern English period is now one of the fastest growing fields of research in the history of English, and a number of studies have benefited from his corpora: Egan (2008), for example, uses them when he explores the usage of the verbs *like*, *love*, *hate*, and *prefer* in Modern English and contemporary English.

Simultaneously, De Smet is well aware of the existence of possible problems in his own corpora, related to the method he employed in their compilation. He draws material from freely available electronic texts stored in Internet archives. The question is the authenticity or the reliability of the texts. He himself states: »More often than not, it is unclear which editions of texts have been drawn on as a source for the texts put online and to what extent the secondary ›editor‹ who digitized the text has respected the original« (p. 15). Despite this concern, however, he considers that the advantages of these corpora, whose compilation is possible because of this methodology, override the possible disadvantages. I must admit that this has been proved by this very book, which provides a most successful

1 I will cite this as an example of the second type, knowing that it is the most heterogeneous of the three categories. For details of pattern (2), see Chapter 6 of ›Spreading Patterns‹.

description of the change of complements in the Modern English period,[2] although I have a slight reservation about the use of corpora of this kind together with more balanced corpora like LOB (Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus) and FLOB (Freiburg-Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus). Figure 5.2, for example, depicts the chronological expansion of the *for … to* construction from 1710 to the 1990s, where the data of 1710–1780, 1780–1850, and 1850–1920 are drawn from CLMET and the data of 1961/1990s come from LOB and FLOB (cf. p. 90). It is misleading here to use a line chart for mixed data of this kind. LOB and FLOB are corpora compiled on totally different principles, and the noticeable jump from 1950–1920 to 1961/1990s may simply be due to the heterogeneity of the material.

The second feature of this book is its full use of various linguistic theories available to date. Hence, the subtitle, ›Diffusional Change in the English *System* of Complementation‹ (emphasis mine), is most appropriate. Chapter 3 (›Complementation‹) is rather synchronic and Chapter 4 (›Diffusional Change‹) rather diachronic, both giving a fairly comprehensive survey of linguistic theories, including the shift from generative grammar to functionalism, variationist frameworks, complexity principle, *construction grammar*, grammaticalization, lexical diffusion, drift, and *analogy* (*semantic and paradigmatic*), perhaps with some focus on the italicized ones. Apparently, the constructional approach has an overarching function to integrate various other approaches, while analogy, whether semantic or paradigmatic, is essential in the diffusion of patterns. Detailed theoretical accounts in Chapters 3 and 4 form the basis for the discussion in the following chapters, where the aforementioned three patterns of complementation are scrutinized. The fundamental philosophy inherent in this book is that language change, both historical and contemporary, needs to be discussed together. Hence, De Smet's approach in ›Spreading Patterns‹ functions to integrate diachronic and synchronic principles.

Finally and most importantly, De Smet has presented in this book a very thorough and explicit picture of the historical diffusion of the three complement patterns mentioned above. Beginning with Noonan's view (2007, p. 101) that »[c]omplementation is basically a matter of matching a particular complement type to a particular complement-taking predicate«,[3] he investigates the diffusion of *for … to* infinitives (Chapter 5), integrated participle clauses (Chapter 6), and gerund

2 This does not necessarily mean that their use is appropriate for any linguistic analyses. De Smet himself is aware of this when he states: »the corpus had better not be used for the study of phenomena that might lightly attract editorial interventions – for example, matters of punctuation, spelling-related issues such as the alternation between *a* and *an* in the indefinite pronoun, or anything that might be seen by an editor as a production error« (De Smet 2005, p. 79).

3 While De Smet gives reference to Noonan (1985), the present review refers to the same line in the most up-to-date version (2007).

complements (Chapter 7). It merits attention that he focuses upon the diffusion of the complement patterns, while previous studies have tended to view the diachronic change of complementation from the perspective of shifting (e. g. Rohdenburg [2006], Iyeiri [2010]). Although this may sound a matter of phrasing only, it is, in fact, this approach that motivates the analysis of relatively minor constructions – minor at least as complement types – like *for … to* infinitives and integrated participle clauses as well as the gerund complement, which is certainly major and which therefore deserves substantial discussion as in this book (cf. pp. 131–251). In his methodology, the pairing of old and new complement types is not necessary. The question is simply how a certain construction arises and how it diffuses in the history of English. In discussing gerunds, for example, De Smet makes reference to abstract nouns instead of other competing complements like *that*-clauses and *to*-infinitives. As for the *for … to* complement, he traces the source not in other constructions that had the same function but in *for to* infinitives in Middle English, whose function was not really the same. This approach of his makes this book quite unique among studies dealing with complementation in English. Paradigmatic analogy is a driving force in the expansion of certain complement types, but he also stresses that various factors are relevant to their diffusion.

In fact, a different mechanism works behind the development of integrated participle clauses. This is a complex category as it consists of at least three different types, according to De Smet: (a) adjectives plus integrated participle clauses, as in *be happy -ing* (cf. pp. 106–107); (b) light verbs plus heavy nouns followed by integrated principle clauses, as in *have difficulty -ing* (cf. pp. 107–108); and (c) *spend* plus nouns denoting time followed by an integrated participle clause, e. g. *spend time -ing*, and their variants (cf. pp. 108–110).[4] The feature that distinguishes the expansion of these from the other complement types is the fact that it relies heavily on the syntactic reinterpretation of adverbial clauses as complements. Further complexity is observed with this category in the timing of diffusion, which differs greatly depending upon the expression concerned. Thus, the idea of this book does not seem to extract a single major principle that explains the historical development of complementation across the board. It rather treats different cases carefully considering various possibilities, with much stress on semantic aspects related to complementation types.

As hitherto discussed, De Smet has made a significant contribution to the advancement of research into complementation in the history of English. As a reviewer, I will touch upon some minor points in this final paragraph, but they should not negate the positive points of his book hitherto mentioned. Unfortu-

4 For example, the verb *spend* may be replaced by *lose, pass, waste*, etc.

nately, at least in my view, his argument is often speculative despite the fact that this research is based upon an enormously large dataset. The alleged link between the *for to* infinitive in Middle English and the *for … to* infinitival complement is a case in point. Reference to further pieces of evidence would have made his argument more convincing, especially in view of the fact that *for* and *to* were frequently fused in later Middle English, even occurring as the inseparable form *forte* frequently. Also, some descriptions of complementation in contemporary English are so perfect that one may feel that there is no room for language change, while on the other hand the main target of this book is more historical. The discussion on the gerundial complements in Present-day English (cf. pp. 138–143) illustrates this case. Here, clear emphasis is placed upon the generalization about the meaning and the choice of appropriate complements. In other words, the tone of this book is often too synchronic despite the diachronic nature of the data explored. Furthermore, I feel on occasion that the influence of foreign language is stressed too much. In relation to the rise of the verb *miss* plus gerunds, for example, De Smet makes reference to the French verb *manquer* followed by an infinitive. As he himself notes, however, this is not necessarily a convincing case of foreign influence, as it does not explain why gerunds instead of infinitives are employed in English. As the last point, I would like to state that it is both an advantage and disadvantage of this book that it favors rigid categorizations, when linguistic reality does not necessarily conform to them. The diffusion of gerunds is, for example, split into four stages where different mechanisms work: Stage I (the Middle English period) displays the diffusion of »narrow paradigmatic analogy« (p. 144, et passim), whereby gerund complements appear in place of bare abstract nouns (cf. pp. 160–174); Stage II (1500–1666) observes the diffusion of gerunds through semantic analogy (cf. pp. 174–197); Stage III (1666–1736) shows the rise of gerunds through »indirect paradigmatic analogy« (p. 145, et passim), which is not necessarily triggered by the existence of bare abstract nouns (cf. pp. 197–219); and Stage IV (1740–present) displays »broad paradigmatic analogy« (p. 144, et passim), whereby gerunds expand without mediation (cf. pp. 220–243). This is certainly an impressive framework, but a detailed look at each stage reveals that the different mechanisms of the four stages are intricately intermingled. It is perhaps more appropriate to state that alteration of trends is visible as the diffusion progresses. The same applies to various other categorizations. Tables 7.1. and 7.2. (cf. pp. 153–158), for instance, make an almost perfect list of different *-ing* types, but the number of the examples classified into categories can often be zero or one. Data of this kind may be meaningful, but more so after the overall trend is clearly presented, although I admit that this is a matter of different stances of researchers. Among lexicographers, there are »lumpers« and »splitters« (Allen 1999, p. 61). I feel that a division of this kind is

also applicable to syntactic studies. I am a lumper, who takes the view that too detailed categorizations can sometimes hinder the perception of major and dynamic diachronic trends but I also understand that both lumpers and splitters are necessary in the progress of language studies and should work together.

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